

Alun Kirby

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Personal Statement

Alun Kirby began in monochrome photography, moving into cameraless photography and exploration of the cyanotype process around 15 years ago. He became a full-time artist in early 2017.

Alun's work addresses memory; specifically, it responds to and investigates historical and contemporary philosophical and psychological theories of memory and self, through visual imagery.

His work primarily uses the [cyanotype](#) cameraless photogram process. This technique, dating from the 1840s, is itself a memory of the birth of photography. There are no negatives, no copies; each piece is a unique interpretation, an imprinted memory made physical.

Like our understanding of memory, Alun's use of cyanotype process is reconstructive rather than reproductive, and captures experience, as does memory, rather than individual moments. This is seen particularly clearly in the [metamorphogram](#) series.

Alun's [background in scientific research](#) led to studying the work of philosophers and scientists examining the relationship between memory, self and imagination. This research provides the foundation for visual interpretation.

Alun is involved in a long-term exploration of memory and self through work with [local dementia action](#) groups and the people they support. In early 2018 Alun was awarded a grant by York Dementia Action Alliance to run [the Memory Box project](#).

The works themselves are often melancholic; whether figurative or abstract, they hold a sense of space, of peace and stillness. These qualities reflect the long, thoughtful processes involved in their creation.

Exhibitions / Events

- 2018 **Large-scale Installation** '1000th of a Wish', Art& Art Show, (October 2018)
- 2018 **Residency Exhibition** 'Archival Activists', York Explore Library (August – December 2018)
- 2018 **Group Show** KPP Prize for Art, Architecture and Design, Sunny Bank Mills, Leeds (August – October 2018)
- 2018 **Exhibition** 'Memory Boxes', with public outreach (August - September 2018)
- 2018 **7OSME (Origami in Science, Maths and Education) Conference, Oxford University** (September 2018) Bursary award, lecture on 'Metamorphograms'
- 2018 **Grant Award**; >£5k for 'Memory Boxes' project from York Dementia Action Alliance. (March – August 2018)
- 2018 **Lenstink / PrintStuff Photobook Exhibition**, 'Glove Story'. (April 2018)
- 2018 **Group Show**; York Open Studios (April, 5 days)
- 2018 **Group Show**; Ferens Open, Ferens Gallery, Hull (Feb – April 2018)
- 2017 **Artist in Residence**; York Explore Library & Archive (Sept 2017 – September 2018) First major work – 'Let Us Satisfy Our Eyes'. [See more here](#). Includes significant outreach activities
- 2017 **Solo exhibition**; 'These Things Evolve Slowly', New Schoolhouse Gallery, York, Aug 25th – Sept 28th. [See more here](#).
- 2017 **Group Show**; 'AIR Open 2017', AIR Gallery, Manchester, Aug 10th – Sept 30th
- 2017 **Guest speaker**, British Origami Society 50th Anniversary Convention (Sept).
- 2017 **Outreach**; ASMBly Labs / Superposition, Leeds, (July and ongoing)
- 2017 **Mentoring Bursary** award from a-n; Rosalind Davis, Collyer Bristow Gallery (June – October)
- 2017 **Group Show**; York Open Studios (April, 5 days)
- 2016 **Group Show**; York Open Studios (April, 5 days)
- 2015 **Press**; 'Glove Story'; self-published photobook. [See more here](#).
- 2015 **Group Show**; The Balancing Act, York Steiner School, York (Sept)
Second iteration, group show, in which Alun again curated, produced and exhibited.
- 2015 **Group Show**; Great North Art Show, Ripon Cathedral (August – September)
- 2014 **Group Show**; The Balancing Act, York Steiner School, York (Sept)
Acting as producer, publicist, artist and handyman, Alun curated work from 6 artists, including his own, in a 'pop-up' gallery within a local school. The exhibition attracted over 400 visitors in 2 days.

1999 **Solo Exhibition:** I Love Dogs / I Love Dogs Too, Space Gallery, London (July – September)
Personal funding was obtained from Canary Wharf Ltd for this exhibition. [See more here.](#)

Between 1999 and 2014 Alun spent several years working in Sweden, returned to work in the UK, was primary carer for his children, and continued to create images throughout.

Outreach Activities

- 2018 Jan – (ongoing) Public workshops in cameraless photography for libraries, events for BBC Get Creative program, events for York 'Bloom' festival.
- 2017 October – (ongoing) Origami Club; leading weekly origami sessions in a local school, for 7-14 year olds
- 2017 October – (ongoing) The 'Memory Box' project. Working with Interact&Connect to develop platforms for enriching communication in local dementia community groups.
- 2017 September – December. Outreach to schools and community groups in support of Residency works.
- 2017 March – (ongoing) Outreach with York Dementia Action Alliance, 'Read & Reminisce' Alzheimer's Society support group, York Library, and others
- 2017 Aug / Sept; Lectures in support of current exhibition
- 2017 May; 'Pint of Science' Creative Reactions guest speaker on Photographic Memory
- 2017 March; Guest speaker for Yorkshire Art & Design Teachers Regional Network
- 2016 May; 'Pint of Science' Creative Reactions guest speaker 'Photography in the Iron Age'
- 2016 November; Guest speaker, York Camera Club

I have taught cyanotype processes to children as young as 5 and adults as old as 85, through school outreach and commercial workshops.

I spent over 20 years as a research scientist. Running my own research programmes provided me with extremely well-developed financial, time, and project management skills. Moreover, the role necessitated a self-directed working model dependent on self-motivation and complete commitment allied to a drive for the very highest quality results.

Education and Prior Employment

Ph.D. Immunology (U. of London), B.Sc. (Hons) Immunology

Feb 2017 - Artist

2015 – 2017 Head of Research Student Administration (University of York)

2011 – 2015 Bursar (York Steiner School)

1992 – 2011 Research Immunologist (London / Sweden / York) Research publications can be found here: [ORCID](#)